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ABSTRACT

This book argues that if we lose our knowledge of the Greek classics, we lose our understanding of Western culture and who we are. Familiarity with the literature, art, and philosophy of the classical world has been synonymous with "education" in the West for over two millennia. The Greek tenets of democracy, capitalism, materialism, personal freedom, civil liberty, and constitutional government are uniquely dynamic and are the bases upon which rest the changes now sweeping the globe. However, the universities and high schools have seen classical education disappear from the curriculum and this is, at least partly, due to classicists themselves who, instead of serving as stewards of the Western legacy, have in the name of modernity, denigrated the Greeks or abandoned the teaching of undergraduates in favor of esoteric and little-read academic research. The book suggests that what is needed to reverse this trend is a core undergraduate curriculum focused on Western Culture, little undergraduate specialization, major changes in education at the Ph.D. level, and a revision of professional ethics. Individual chapters are titled: (1) "Homer is Dead"; (2) "Thinking Like a Greek"; (3) "Who Killed Homer--And Why?"; (4) "Teaching Greek Is Not Easy"; and (5) "What We Could Do." A proposed reading list is appended.) (DB)

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